



## United States Senate Budget Committee

**JEFF SESSIONS | Ranking Member**

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# Sessions Confronts Democrat Leaders On Budget Games; Senate ‘Failing Miserably’ To Do Its Job

*“Paul Ryan is leading. Speaker Boehner is leading. House Republicans are leading. But Senate Democrats, who control this chamber—who asked for this job—are refusing to allow a budget to move forward. They are refusing to share with the American people the contents of the plan they crafted behind closed doors—a plan they claim exists.*

*“I look forward to the chance to support the House GOP budget... But let’s look at the bigger picture this week. The planned series of votes are designed by the Majority Leader to fail. They are designed as a gimmick to distract attention from the unwillingness of Senate Democrats to produce an honest plan. They are designed to keep this Senate from doing its job and defending this Republic from a grave financial danger.*

*On Memorial Day we honor those who have fallen for this country... We honor those who gave their last breath to preserve our way of life. But now that way of life is threatened by a tidal wave of debt that we’re refusing to confront... That the Senate would go into recess this week—refusing to work on a budget or to even hold a public meeting—is unthinkable.”*

**WASHINGTON—U.S. Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-AL), Ranking Member of the Senate Budget Committee, spoke on the Senate floor today to announce his objection to Majority Leader Harry Reid’s plan for scripted budget votes this week while at the same time he refuses to allow the budget process to move forward 754 days since the Senate last produced a budget. Sessions also expressed his objection to going into Memorial Day recess if Democrat leaders continue to prevent any work from being done on an FY2012 budget resolution.**

**Sessions’ remarks, as prepared, follow:**

*“I stand here today deeply concerned by our growing financial crisis and deeply angered by the failure of this Senate to take any meaningful steps to address it. And I am going to announce steps that I will take to try and force the Senate to do its job since the Senate’s Democrat leaders seem determined to prevent the people’s work from being done.*

All we have seen from Majority Leader Reid and Senate Democrats are cynical political games—distractions and gimmicks to avoid confronting our fiscal nightmare.

How else can you explain why in the middle of this crisis, Senate Democrats have not even produced a budget—have not even allowed the Budget Committee to meet to work on one? We are required by law to produce a budget in committee and to pass a budget on the Senate floor. But the Democrat majority has shut that process down. We have not produced a budget in 754 days. 754 days. Today I joined with the newest member of our Budget Committee, Senator Kelly Ayotte, to send a letter to Sen. Reid—signed by every Republican senator—pressing him to finally allow the Senate to begin work on a budget.

But we are told in the media that Senate Democrats' refusal to put forward a budget is just good strategy. That it's best that they avoid putting a plan on paper. Here's an excerpt from a recent article in the *Wall Street Journal*. Fittingly, the article is entitled "Democrats Unhurried in Work on Budget":

As a political matter, Democratic strategists say there may be little benefit in producing a budget that would inevitably include unpopular items. Many Democrats believe a recent House GOP proposal to overhaul Medicare is proving to be unpopular and has given Democrats a political advantage. They are loath to give that up by proposing higher taxes... Senate Democrats plan to hold a vote on the Ryan plan... hoping to force GOP senators to cast a vote on the Medicare overhaul that could prove politically difficult.

This is astonishing. Is it the position of the Democrat party that their vision for deficit reduction is so unpopular or unfeasible that they won't even articulate it in public, let alone offer it up as a budget? The heads of the fiscal commission warn an economic crisis may be just one or two years away, but Senate Democrats would prefer to hide in the hills and take shots at Republicans from a distance?

Chairman Paul Ryan and the House GOP have put forward a plan to get this country out of a looming Greece-like debt crisis, make our economy more competitive, and save Medicare for future generations. It's an honest, courageous plan that will improve the quality of life for millions of Americans.

By contrast, the president's budget doubles our national debt and puts our entire country at risk—even though the president promised it would "not add more to our debt" and would have us "live within our means."

And where do Senate Democrats stand? They refuse to put forward their own plan. Last week Senate Majority Leader Reid said the Senate Democrats don't need a budget: "There's no need to have a Democratic budget, in my opinion." He said it would be "foolish" to present one. The only thing that's foolish is violating the Congressional Budget Act in a cynical attempt for political gain.

So we find ourselves in the remarkable position this week of having Senate Democrat leaders bring forward not a Senate Budget, but bring forward the House GOP budget, only to vote it down while offering no alternative of their own. They are going to abuse

the Congressional Budget Act by bringing forward a budget they have no intention of working on, no intention of taking seriously, no intention of opening for amendment or discussion. They have only one goal—use this majority to vote it down.

I look forward to the chance to support the House GOP budget. I look forward to casting a vote which says we will get spending under control and deal honestly with our budget challenges—short and long term. I look forward to voting for a budget that will allow the economy to create jobs and make us more competitive.

But let's look at the bigger picture this week. The planned series of votes are designed by the Majority Leader to fail. They are designed as a gimmick to distract attention from the unwillingness of Senate Democrats to produce an honest plan. They are designed to keep this Senate from doing its job and defending this Republic from a grave financial danger.

Therefore, I will not provide unanimous consent for any pre-arranged package of votes. Anyone can call up these budget votes, consistent with the rules, anytime they wish. But a package deal that wastes this Senate's time I cannot and will not support. The Majority Leader is wasting the American people's time. I am here to speak honestly and tell the truth.

Further, I will not agree to unanimous consent on any motion to adjourn for the Memorial Day Recess. If we are going to close down this chamber for another week without having produced a budget—without having even scheduled a committee meeting—then I am going to force a vote on it.

Paul Ryan is leading. Speaker Boehner is leading. House Republicans are leading. But Senate Democrats, who control this chamber—who asked for this job—are refusing to allow a budget to move forward. They are refusing to share with the American people the contents of the plan they crafted behind closed doors—a plan they claim exists in some form.

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On Memorial Day we honor those who have fallen for this country. We honor the brave men and women who have risked and given everything for our freedom and our future. We honor those who gave their last breath to preserve our way of life.

But now that way of life is threatened by a tidal wave of debt that we're refusing to confront. It is a debt that we have created, that we are growing, and that is up to us to defeat. That the Senate would go into recess this week—refusing to work on a budget or to even hold a public meeting—is unthinkable. Our soldiers serving overseas will not get the next week off. Why should the Senate get a week off after failing miserably to do its job?

My message to Majority Leader Reid is simple: if you object to the House GOP plan, or to other Republican plans, then you must come forward with your own honest plan to prevent financial catastrophe and create a more prosperous future.

In closing, I would like to quote from the preamble of the report issued by Fiscal Commission:

In the weeks and months to come, countless advocacy groups and special interests will try mightily through expensive, dramatic, and heart-wrenching media assaults to exempt themselves from shared sacrifice and common purpose. The national interest, not special interests, must prevail. We urge leaders and citizens with principled concerns about any of our recommendations to follow what we call the Becerra Rule: *Don't shoot down an idea without offering a better idea in its place.*

If Majority Leader Reid and Senate Democrats wish to criticize the House Republican budget, they ought to have the courage to offer their alternative vision in its place. I thank the chair and yield the floor.”

*[Note: Under Senate rules, Sen. Reid can bring forward a budget without UC. Sessions' comments refer to a package arrangement. To view a letter from Sen. Sessions and Sen. Ayotte, signed by all 47 Republican senators, in which the senators ask Majority Leader Reid to ensure that a budget is brought forward in committee and on the Senate floor, please [click here](#).]*

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